

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph [0001] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] The present invention in its broadest aspect relates generally to a mechanism for fastening a first member to a second member and, more particularly, to a ~~one~~mechanism one-piece mechanism for attaching body molding to a side panel of a motor vehicle.

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following amended paragraph:

[0005] The present invention relates to a ~~one~~fastening one-piece fastening mechanism which is preferably integrally formed with or otherwise attached to the molding or trim piece which is to be fastened to a housing structure such as the side panel of a motor vehicle. The present fastening mechanism includes a first opening which extends substantially the full length of the fastener and a second opening which extends transversely to the first opening and through the entire mechanism. The present mechanism is sized and shaped with respect to the first and second openings so as to be sufficiently flexible and resilient to compress when inserted into an aperture associated with a housing structure or vehicle side panel when pressure is applied thereagainst, yet sufficiently resilient to return substantially to its original position when the pressure is removed. The present mechanism is provided with resiliently flexible barbs or detents which engage the periphery of the aperture and hold it in place therewith thereby securing the molding or trim piece to the housing structure.

Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] Fig. 3 is a ~~crossview~~ cross-sectional view of the distal end of the present fastening mechanism taken along line 3-3 of Fig. 2.

Please replace paragraph [0009] with the following amended paragraph:

[0009] Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the fastening mechanism of Figs. 1-3 illustrating the transverse opening extending through one side portion thereof and the barbs or detents formed thereby.

Please replace paragraph [0010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] Fig. 5 is a ~~outside~~ cut-away side elevational view of the present fastening mechanism that has been inserted into an aperture associated with a typical housing structure such as a vehicle side panel.

Please replace paragraph [0011] with the following amended paragraph:

[0011] Fig. 6 is a ~~crossview~~ cross-sectional view of the distal end of another embodiment of the present fastening mechanism.

Please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

[0012] Referring to the drawings wherein like numerals refer to like parts, the number 50 in Fig. 1 represents a typical vehicle molding or trim member 50 having a plurality of fastening members 10 integrally formed therewith, the fastening members 10 ~~be~~ being formed and constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. As best illustrated in

Figs. 1-5, the fastening member 10 is of a ~~oneconstruction~~ one-piece construction and is preferably integrally formed or otherwise attached to the molding or trim piece 50 for insertion into apertures associated with a housing structure such as the side panel of a motor vehicle. The present invention contemplates a ~~onemechanism~~ one-piece mechanism for attaching a first member to a second member such as molding 50 to the side panel of a vehicle. The fastening mechanism 10 is sufficiently flexible so that it will compress sufficiently when inserted into a corresponding aperture associated with the second member or a vehicle side panel when pressure is applied at its distal end thereby allowing the fastening member to be received within the aperture as will be hereinafter explained, yet sufficiently resilient to return substantially to its original shape when such pressure is removed. The present mechanism is provided with a plurality of barbs or detents 32 which hold it in place within the aperture thereby securing the molding 50 or other first member to a second member such as the side panel of a motor vehicle as will be likewise hereinafter further explained.

Please replace paragraph [0013] with the following amended paragraph:

[0013] The present invention is particularly suited for attaching molding or trim to side panels of motor vehicles. Although the fastening mechanism 10 can be separate from the molding or trim piece 50, it is preferable if the ~~onefastening~~ one-piece fastening member 10 be integrally attached to the molding or trim piece 50. Indeed, it is most preferable if the molding or trim piece 50 is molded with a plurality of the ~~onefastening~~ one-piece fastening members 10 attached thereto as part of the molding process.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

[0015] The function of the present mechanism 10 is to fasten the molding or trim piece 50 to a housing or side panel structure which contains apertures into which the fastening mechanisms are inserted. Accordingly, the present mechanism must be sufficiently flexible throughout at least a portion of its length to compress into the aperture yet to be sufficiently resiliant to return substantially to its original shape after it is inserted therewithin. Further, it is important that the mechanism be strong enough so that it doesn't break during the insertion process or thereafter. This combination of strength, flexibility and resiliency is the result of the type of material from which the mechanism is made, its shape and size. Flexibility is provided by selecting a size and shape which affords flexing or bending of the distal end during the insertion process. For example, the length of the fastening mechanism 10 should be at least approximately twice as long as it is wide and should include flex or bend points or areas to allow for compression of the distal end of the member 10 during insertion into a corresponding aperture. The mechanism 10 as illustrated includes bend or flex points on two sides of the distal end. Such bend or flex points can be provided by a ~~six~~configuration ~~six~~-sided configuration, especially a fastening member substantially in the shape of a hexagon. Another embodiment provides bend or flex points by utilizing a ~~six~~configuration ~~six~~-sided configuration wherein the bend or flex points are separated from one another by a distance which is less than the length of the side of the present mechanism which does not include bend points. Other sizes, shapes and configurations yielding the necessary flexibility and resiliency are likewise recognized and anticipated.

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

[0017] The present invention can be further understood by referring to the drawing wherein Figs. 2~~more~~ 2-5 more particularly disclose one embodiment of the present fastening member 10, the member 10 including a body portion 12 having a proximal end 14, a distal end 16, a pair of closed side wall portions 18, and a pair of partially open side wall portions 20 as best illustrated in Fig. 4. The body portion 12 includes a first opening 22 which extends longitudinally through substantially the full length of body portion 12 from the distal end 16 to the proximal end 14. Distal end 16 encloses opening 22. Fig. 3 illustrates a ~~cross~~~~shape~~ cross-section of the distal end of one embodiment of the fastening member 10 wherein the distal end 16 includes bend or flex points 24 associated with opposed side portions 20 through which a second opening 26 extends therethrough as best seen in Fig. 4. The second opening 26 extends transversely through opposed side portions 20 of body portion 12 and through the first opening 22. In the embodiment of Figs. 1~~the crossshape~~ 1-5 the cross-sectional shape of the distal end 16 is substantially a hexagon which forms bend or flex points 24.

Please replace paragraph [0019] with the following amended paragraph:

[0019] Fig. 5 is a ~~cut away~~ cut-away side elevational view of the fastening mechanism 10 integrally attached to a molding piece such as molding piece 50 that has been inserted into an aperture 34 associated with a housing structure 36 such as the side panel of a motor vehicle. Detents 32 are spaced from one another and from the proximal end 14 (Figs. 4 and 5) and are provided to ensure that the fastening mechanism 10 remains within the aperture 34 after it has been inserted therein. During insertion, side portions 20 around opening 26 flex sufficiently to allow insertion of the distal end 16 of the fastening member 10 through the aperture 34, yet side

portions 20 are sufficiently resilient to return substantially to their original position after insertion. Detents or barbs 32 engage the periphery of aperture 34 after they pass therethrough and prevent the fastening member 10 from being pulled back through the aperture 34.

Please replace paragraph [0020] with the following amended paragraph:

[0020] Fig. 6 illustrates a ~~crossview~~ cross-sectional view of the distal end of another embodiment 38 of the present fastening member wherein the distal end 40 includes bend or flex points 44 associated with side portions 42 through which an opening similar to opening 26 extends therethrough. In this particular embodiment, the ~~crossshape~~ cross-sectional shape of the distal end 40 is such that the distance between the bend points 44 is less than the width of the closed side portions 46. In all other respects, the construction of embodiment 38 is substantially similar to the construction of fastening member 10.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] Accordingly, the present invention comprises a fastening mechanism for attaching a molding or trim piece to a housing structure wherein the fastening mechanism comprises a body portion having a distal end for insertion into an aperture associated with the housing structure and a proximal end attached to the molding piece, the body portion having a first opening which extends longitudinally for substantially the full length of the body portion and a second opening which extends transversely through the body portion whereby the body portion and the second opening define a plurality of resiliently flexible detents or barbs spaced from the proximal end of the body portion for maintaining the body portion within the housing aperture. By fabricating

the molding piece 50 and fastening mechanism 10 or 38 as an integral device, molding pieces such as molding piece 50 can be easily and inexpensively produced for quick and easy attachment to a housing structure, such as a vehicle side panel, without loss of fastening pieces or other complications. In its preferred embodiment, the present mechanism includes bend or flex points in a ~~sixdistal~~ six-sided distal end configuration so that the fastening member is flexible yet strong.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

[0023] Although the present fastening members 10 and 38 have been described in association with a typical molding or trim piece attachable to the side panel of a motor vehicle such as the molding piece 50 illustrated in Fig. 1, it is recognized and anticipated that the present fastening members can be utilized in association with any first member that must be attached to a second member wherein the second member includes an aperture for receiving the fastening member. It is also recognized and anticipated that the overall shape of body portion 12 may take on a wide variety of different configurations other than the ~~six~~configurations six-sided configurations illustrated in Figs. 3 and 6. Still further, it is likewise recognized and anticipated that the shape of the transverse opening 26 extending through body portion 12 can likewise take on a wide variety of different sizes and shapes so long as the shape and size of the second opening in combination with the shape and size of the body portion define the plurality of resiliently flexible detents or barbs 32 which are utilized for maintaining the body portion or fastening member within an aperture associated with a typical housing structure.

Please replace paragraph [0024] with the following amended paragraph:

[0024] Thus, there has been shown and described several embodiments of a novel ~~onesnap~~ one-piece snap fastening mechanism for use in attaching a first member to a second member, which fastening mechanism fulfills all of the objects and advantages sought therefor. As is evident from the foregoing description, certain aspects of the present invention are not limited by the particular details of the examples illustrated herein, and it is therefore contemplated that many changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications of the present invention, including equivalents thereof, will become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering the specification and the accompanying drawings. All such changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed to be covered by the invention which is limited only the claims which follow.